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TITLE: HIV Community Planning in the Next Decade: A California Perspective

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ISSUE: Community planning has become a cornerstone in our national response to the HIV epidemic. It is an ambitious process that plays an integral role in the development of HIV prevention and care/treatment programs and the allocation of funds for such programs. Planning efforts are enhanced when data are used in making programmatic and funding decisions. However, the skills and experience of the research community have not been sufficiently incorporated in HIV planning efforts.

SETTING: Los Angeles, CA, for members of HIV community planning bodies, public health staff, and researchers.

PROJECT: The Center for HIV Identification, Prevention, and Treatment Services, a research center funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, will focus its 1999 policy forum on HIV community planning in the next decade. This conference, scheduled for June 1, 1999, will be a vehicle for all stakeholders in HIV community planning to work together to define key research and process questions raised by planning efforts for HIV prevention and care/treatment services. This will be achieved through the use of work groups and will result in the development of a consensus statement.

RESULTS: A consensus statement on the key research and process questions raised by HIV community planning will be developed from the forum and will focus on five areas: (1) Means and Ends of HIV Community Planning, (2) Using Data to Inform Community Planning, (3) Community Involvement, (4) Researchers Involvement, and (5) Prevention and Care/Treatment Planning. This document will articulate areas where additional process and outcome research is needed to better understand the impact of HIV community planning efforts.

LESSONS LEARNED: Planning efforts for both HIV prevention and care/treatment are enhanced when data are used in making programmatic and funding decisions. Community planning groups are confronting the difficult task of analyzing and responding to trends in their local epidemics. This requires individuals with diverse backgrounds to interpret and apply data in the decision-making process. The issues identified in the five primary areas will help shape the health policy research agenda in California and may inform national policy directions in community planning.

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